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USDA'S REPORT TO CONSUMERS

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE · OFFICE OF INFORMATION · WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

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NEW YEARBOOK

Our Great Outdoors. Impressive scenes depicting the glorious heritage of our land in color photographs of conservation areas enhanced with the brilliant foliage of the changing seasons are highlighted in "Outdoors USA" the new Yearbook of Agriculture. A guide to camping, gardening, traveling, outdoor sports, and conservation, the Yearbook is also designed to show how we are moving forward to restore, conserve and use our natural resources. The potential of our rural sites as the communities of tomorrow is also discussed. U. S. Department of Agriculture specialists, university faculty members, outdoor writers and officials of other governmental agencies are contributors to the book. An ideal gift for any member of the family "Outdoors USA" may be obtained for $2.75 from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. 20402. Limited numbers of the 1967 Yearbook are available free from your Senator or Congressman.

What's Ahead? The U. S. Department of Agriculture's 45th annual National Outlook Conference will be held in Washington November 13-16. Highlights will be reported in the December OUTLOOK issue of SERVICE. Specialists will report on current trends and prospects for 1968.

CHANGING TIMES

The Fading Milk Bottle. Back in 1878 the glass milk bottle replaced the old 5 or 10 gallon metal cans. In 1906 the paper container was introduced, but not widely accepted until the 1930's according to a report by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Recent innovations have included plastics, among other containers used for delivering milk to the home and store. Today, glass bottles only account for 32 percent of the milk containers. The past century of change has also been marked by other milk marketing shifts of benefit or convenience to the milk consumer, such as the move from raw milk to pasteurized. Today, most milk is homogenized as well as pasteurized and the containers are getting bigger all the time...now gallon sizes are gaining in popularity. What's ahead? Because of the larger containers, milkmen may become rare figures. The "see through" plastic container may be commonly used--if costs can be lowered.

FOOD FACTS

November Food Buys. Turkeys are featured on the November plentiful foods list, according to the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Also plentiful are broiler fryers, pork, dry split peas, potatoes, and grape juice.

Whey: Now an Asset. Although the nursery rhyme says Little Miss Muffet ate the whey along with the curds, U. S. cheesemakers have been able to use only limited amounts of this low-cost high-nutrition byproduct of cheese manufacture. More than half the 7 billion pounds of whey used to be discarded yearly. The rest was used for animal feed or to fertilize fields, or it was dried to use as a dried skim milk substitute. Now the market for dried whey is being increased by the addition of this byproduct in specialty foods. U. S. Department of Agriculture scientists recently reported the use of dried whey in ice pops. The inclusion of only 2.6 percent whey in the mix reduced the acidity of the ice pops to a level that British researchers found effective in reducing tooth decay. Dried whey is now being used in hot roll mixes, pop-tarts, frozen baked potatoes or frozen vegetables with cheese sauce, frozen macaroni and cheese.

Family Food Assistance. Many people who live in poverty remain in poverty because they can't get enough nourishment for strength and vitality. The Commodity Distribution Program of the U. S. Department of Agriculture's Consumer and Marketing Service is one way of helping such people and USDA's Food Stamp Program is another. Both programs have the same objectives -- to provide more food for those who need it and to make effective use of our food abundance for the benefit of farmers and consumers alike. Neither program provides all the food a family needs. They supplement family-food purchasing power -- the donation program through direct distribution of staple foods; the food stamp program through food coupons that can be spent like money for food in any retail food outlet authorized to accept them. Rough estimates indicate that by the end of July nearly 78% of the U. S. population lived in areas that have either a family food donation program or a food stamp program. The program has been extended to a few additional areas since then. No city or county can have both programs, but many -- including some where the need for help is greatest -- are still without either one.

What People Will Eat. People eat what they like; what they like may be influenced by many factors -- including tradition, religion, ceremony and the ways they are accustomed to buying and preparing foods. Scientists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, in cooperation with other agencies, have developed and standardized methods for predicting consumer acceptance and use trained and untrained taste panels to test acceptance of the new food products they develop and ones developed commercially. They pass this information on to food processors and the public.

Taste Panels Help Evaluate Foods. A panel of tasters is an important research group used by U. S. Department of Agriculture scientists for such diverse jobs as devising improved methods of preparing food, developing new processed foods, and producing better livestock. No piece of equipment has yet been able to match completely the ability of human senses--taste, smell, feel, and sight--in gauging the subtle differences in food flavors and textures. Taste-panel scores for tenderness, juiciness, and flavor, for example, show that today's young tender poultry requires less cooking time than poultry of past years.

RECREATION

Camping Out -- Down on the Farm. Out in Minnesota, a 169 acre farm owner conceived the idea of opening a "Camp in the Woods" on the back portion of his land. The farm campsite was established in 1965 with facilities for 40 tents and camping trailers plus a fiberglass-lined swimming pool. Today the "Camp in the Woods" is preparing more ground to accommodate several hundred campers because of the enthusiastic reception to the farm-camp idea. The U. S. Department of Agriculture reports much of the farm income in the future is expected to come from rural recreation.

RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

It Couldn't Be Done! Pessimists back in the 1930's said a mechanical tomato picker would never work. Tomatoes, being thin-skinned and bruised easily, could not be picked mechanically. Optimists said that tomato vines could be grown in rows with space for a machine to go between them. A special tomato suitable for machine-harvesting was developed--a pear shaped tomato! And now, a square tomato bred by plant geneticists for less damage in shipping is forecast by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Costwise, California growers say that harvesting by machine has cost them $7.27 less a ton than harvesting by hand.

Time Capsules Enter Insect War. Tiny little time pills, similar to those used by humans for all-day cold relief, may someday deliver the knockout punch to insect pests attacking alfalfa, corn, and cotton crops. USDA entomologists have found that experimental capsule release of bacteria (Bacillus thuringiensis) over a selected number of days controlled up to 90 percent of European corn borers in an Iowa field--equal to results obtained with DDT treatments. Development of encapsulated viruses as a major pest control weapon could sharply reduce the farmer's reliance on persistent pesticides with their attendant safety hazards and residue problems.

BOOKLETS

How Many Ways Can You Cook Potatoes? Food shoppers buy potatoes, both fresh and processed, to supply about 2 pounds each week to every man, woman and child in this country. Even dieters can enjoy potatoes--only 100 calories to a medium size baked or boiled potato. More than just another recipe book, the latest bulletin "Potatoes in Popular Ways," No. 55, published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, offers information on buying and storing potatoes, our most popular vegetable. More than 25 interesting ways to improve the favorite vegetable are offered in the bulletin for 15 cents from the U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

Dream House or Nightmare? A good scientific look at the soil before you buy or build may save you a great deal of grief--and money--afterwards. After a recent rainfall in suburban Washington, D. C. the upper layer of a hillside site became saturated and a $30,000 sturdy-looking brick house came tumbling down the hill! Things you should check include knowing if the soil will support the house without settling and cracking, the water table and soil permeability...if a basement would be dry, will it flood under certain conditions? Can a septic system be used...is the lot in a flood plain and subject to flooding from nearby waterways during a heavy storm? A real eye-opener for anyone considering buying or building a home is the booklet published by the Department of Agriculture called "Know the Soil You Build On" AIB-320, available for 15 cents from the U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. 20402.

Clothing Construction Made Simple. "Simplified Clothing Construction" is the title of the new Home and Garden Bulletin No. 59--one that will be welcomed by sewing novices as well as those with more experience. Many sewing tasks can be simplified without sacrificing high standards of appearance, workmanship, and serviceability. Tips in this bulletin--and there are many of them in its 32 pages--point out some ways to save time and effort in making durable, satisfactory garments. Another publication of the U. S. Department of Agriculture that provides information on construction and repair of clothing at home is "Clothing Repairs," Home and Garden Bulletin No. 107. Copies of these publications are available for 25 cents each from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. 20402. Please include your zip code.

Meal Planning Guides. The U. S. Department of Agriculture and the U. S. Department of the Interior have teamed up to produce recipes and suggestions for more than 150 dishes, rich in variety, flavor, and food value -- and low in cost for budget-conscious homemakers. One publication, "Money-Saving Main Dishes" (HG-43) includes a quick reference table on preparing various cuts of meat. Methods for estimating protein content in common protein-rich foods, such as meat, cheese, or beans, are given in the 46-page booklet. A general food guide lists essentials of a balanced diet,and specific instructions for preparing each type of food precede each recipe. Included is a section on preparing a "Lunch-Box Meal." You can obtain copies of HG-43 for 20 cents each by writing to the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Please include your zip code.

For information about items in this issue, write: Editor of SERVICE, Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. 20250